

# 2008 IN REVIEW

## Public Safety



### Board acts to expand Emergency Operations Center

On October 28 the Board of Supervisors approved a much-needed expansion of the County's Emergency Operations Center in Rialto. The 1,530-square-foot expansion to the 6,000-square-foot facility will enhance the county's ability to coordinate multi-agency responses to both small- and large-scale disasters. In September, the Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded the County a \$323,943 grant for EOC expansion. It was the only jurisdiction in California to receive such a grant. The total cost of the project is \$512,000 with the balance to come from the County's Capital Improvement Program and other County funds.

### County Fire staff assists Gulfport following Hurricane Gustav

On September 2 a four-member County Fire Incident Management Team departed for Gulfport, Mississippi, to assist the Gulf Coast city in its recovery from Hurricane Gustav and help the community prepare for future disasters. The team's primary mission was to support the city's efforts to create a written Incident Action Plan that would include a scenario based around a Category 4 or greater hurricane. The plan will be shared by Gulfport and the County of San Bernardino, and will contain specific information about each jurisdiction, including phone numbers for key personnel and maps of the city and county with Global Positioning Satellite coordinates for important public facilities. The county made a commitment following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to help Gulfport in times of need. Gulfport made the same commitment, having sent fire officials to assist the county during the 2007 wildfires.



### New telephone notification system will give residents control

On June 24 the Board of Supervisors approved a contract to provide the county with a new Telephone Emergency Notification System, or TENS, that will offer residents the ability to add cell phone numbers, work phone numbers, and other phone numbers besides their home numbers to the list of numbers that would receive emergency notices during disasters. The system will also allow residents to sign up for emergency notices via e-mail and text messaging in a variety of languages. The current system has been an overwhelming success, placing more than 240,000 calls during 20 wildfire and flood-threat events since it was created in 2004. However, the current system can only send recorded alerts to land-line phone numbers provided to the county by the various phone service providers. "This system has the potential to put residents in control of how they receive disaster information," said Supervisor Paul Biane, who was chairman at the time of the Board's action.



## Public Safety (Continued)



### Supervisors pick up two national awards from WeTip

On May 2 the county collected two awards from the national crime-fighting organization WeTip during the group's National Conference in Ontario. Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales was honored as the "County Supervisor of the Year," and First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt received on the county's behalf the "Program Development Award" in recognition of the county's implementation of an illegal dumping enforcement program. In 2007 the county developed a comprehensive anti-illegal dumping program that included the adoption of an illegal dumping ordinance, which created new fines and penalties for dumpers, the installation of warning signs and surveillance cameras in problem dumping areas, the creation of a reward program for tipsters, and a partnership with WeTip.

### Mitzelfelt's Quake Panel Appointment Confirmed by Senate

On February 28 the California State Senate confirmed Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's appointment of County Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt to the California Seismic Safety Commission. "Our region is overdue for a major earthquake and I've been working with the Commission to ensure that our region is prepared for it," Mitzelfelt said. The commission investigates earthquakes, researches earthquake-related issues and reports and recommends to the Governor and Legislature policies and programs needed to reduce earthquake risk.

### Supervisors Approve Barring Sex Offenders from Ice Cream Trucks

On March 25 the Board of Supervisors unanimously supported a proposed law to prevent sex offenders from operating ice cream trucks. Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt also proposed drafting an ordinance that would implement the provision of the bill in San Bernardino County. The Board endorsed Assembly Bill 2169 to prohibit cities and counties from issuing a business license to operate an ice cream truck to registered sex offenders. The ordinance would enact such a prohibition in San Bernardino County regardless of whether or not the bill becomes a law. The bill was proposed after parents in a Riverside County neighborhood found out their local ice cream truck driver was a registered sex offender. There are more than 250 ice cream trucks operating in San Bernardino County.

### County targets San Francisco for dumping illegal immigrant criminals in Yucaipa

On July 8 the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution admonishing the City of San Francisco for dumping illegal immigrant drug dealers in a youth halfway house in Yucaipa where they promptly escaped. The same thing occurred last year when four El Salvadoran drug dealers were sent to a San Bernardino County halfway house. San Bernardino law enforcement and probation officials did not find out about either situation until after the fact. "The County of San Bernardino seeks to recoup all law enforcement and probation costs from the City of San Francisco, initiating a law suit if necessary," said Supervisor Gary Ovitt, who spearheaded the county's action. "We are further looking into the practice, by the city's probation department, of not notifying affected jurisdictions



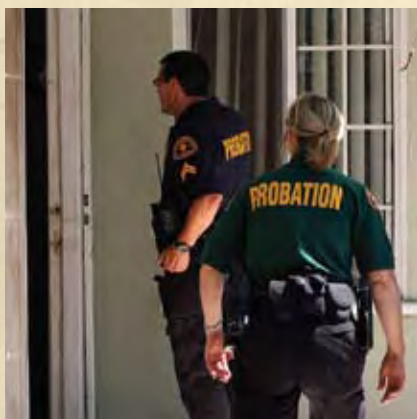
## Public Safety (Continued)



with the specifics and particulars of the offenders being sent to our local facilities. The citizens of San Bernardino County should not have to pay for or be burdened with the fallout from this flawed and potentially dangerous policy”

### District Attorney launches multi-agency effort to fight truancy

Recognizing that truancy is often the first step in a child’s journey into crime and the social welfare system, the District Attorney’s Office in 2008 brought together several agencies in a concerted effort to keep young people from skipping school. San Bernardino County’s dropout rate has steadily increased since 2002 to its current level of 26.6% - nearly 10,000 children. The Truancy Abatement Coalition, or TAC, coordinates delivery of County services before a child drops out of school. Partners include Public Health, Behavioral Health, the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, Transitional Assistance, Department of Children’s Services, Workforce Development and San Bernardino County Schools. The group meets quarterly to discuss streamlining the delivery of services and how to target the problems that lead to truancy.



### Rialto Gang Injunction

In 2008, District Attorney Michael A. Ramos and Supervisor Paul Biane co-sponsored a Gang Injunction Program, which allows the county to combat gangs through civil proceedings. These injunctions apply to “territorial gangs” that conduct their criminal efforts in a defined area. The abatement actions prevent gang members from congregating in a particular area. On July 2, Ramos announced the filing of the county’s first gang injunction lawsuit, targeting South Side Rialto, a violent, multi-generational criminal street gang that has plagued the citizens of Rialto and the surrounding areas for decades. On August 19, Ramos announced the filing of a lawsuit seeking a gang injunction in the City of Colton against the Colton City Crips. This was the first gang injunction lawsuit filed by the county in which “banishment” was requested. Banishment makes gang members subject to arrest for continuing to trespass on the premises.

### Cold Case Team

On April 14 the Sheriff’s Department and the District Attorney’s Office joined forces to establish a Cold Case team composed of four detectives and a deputy district attorney. During its first year the team cleared several cases which otherwise would likely have remained unsolved. Among their successes were:

- Paul Zamora arrested for a 1982 killing in Bloomington
- Guy Johnson and Chris Tolliver arrested and sentenced to prison for a killing in 2000
- Dashon Parker arrested for a murder in 2000
- Tracy Petrocelli arrested for a murder in 1981
- Robert Kirkup arrested for a 1992 case
- Darrin Brown arrested for killing a woman in Hesperia in 1989
- David Beltran arrested for a 2003 murder
- Gustavo Perez arrested and, in the team’s first jury trial, convicted for killing his wife in Big Bear in 1992





## Public Safety (Continued)



### Operation Desert Heat

From May 30 to June 30, the Sheriff's Department conducted an extended enforcement operation aimed at cracking down on an increase in crime and gang activity in the Victor Valley. A total of 1,203 arrests were made during the operation and more than 50 parolees were returned to state prison. During the month-long operation, robberies reported in the Victor Valley decreased by 41 percent from the same time period in 2007, carjackings decreased by 40 percent, and vehicle thefts dropped by 19 percent. Sheriff Gary Penrod noted that while deputies and officers made more than 1,200 arrests, there was only one use-of-force incident. "That speaks to the high level of professionalism our guys exhibit," the Sheriff said. "I'm convinced we have made a positive impact on gangs and crime in the Victor Valley."

### Victorville Fire Department Joins County Fire team

On July 5, the County Fire Department began serving as the City of Victorville's fire department. The Victorville City Council approved the contract with the county on May 13, with the expectation of transitioning its employees and starting a paramedic program for city residents within 45 days, and the county proudly accomplished that goal. County Fire is dedicated to providing professional fire protection services, including investigations, advance life support services, rescue services and aircraft rescue and firefighting to the citizens of Victorville and establishing a long term relationship with the city.

### CERT trailers ready for use to roll in trainings and disasters

In April, seven Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training/Response Trailers were rolled out to communities within the county for the purpose of assisting in CERT training and to provide supplies for CERT-trained volunteers to help their community during times of disaster. The County Fire Department Office of Emergency Services purchased the CERT Training/Response Trailers with the help of federal grant dollars for San Bernardino County cities, towns and unincorporated areas. Five of the seven trailers will be located in the county's five emergency management zones in the Town of Apple Valley, Big Bear City, Ontario, Redlands, and the Town of Yucca Valley. In addition one trailer is located at Fire Station 2 in the unincorporated community of Devore, and one at the County Emergency Operations Center in Rialto. The CERT program trains residents to assist in preparing for, and responding to, disasters until professional emergency personnel can arrive. More than 6,000 County residents are CERT-trained and there are currently more than 20 active CERT programs throughout the County.

### Supervisors approve ordinances to prevent catastrophic loss

In September, the Board of Supervisors approved ordinances requiring fire-resistant roofs and defensible space for homes in the mountain communities. The Roof Ordinance mandates that all roof coverings be either non-combustible or of fire-retardant material not composed of organic fiber with a minimum Class A rating by July 1, 2014. The defensible space ordinance was modified to include green vegetation management, not just dead fuel reduction. The county goes beyond the state requirement and is mandating 100 feet of clearance to include adjacent property where there is a hazard. Time and again excessive fuels around homes have contributed to wildfires, destroying many homes.